

County Profile: Hunterdon

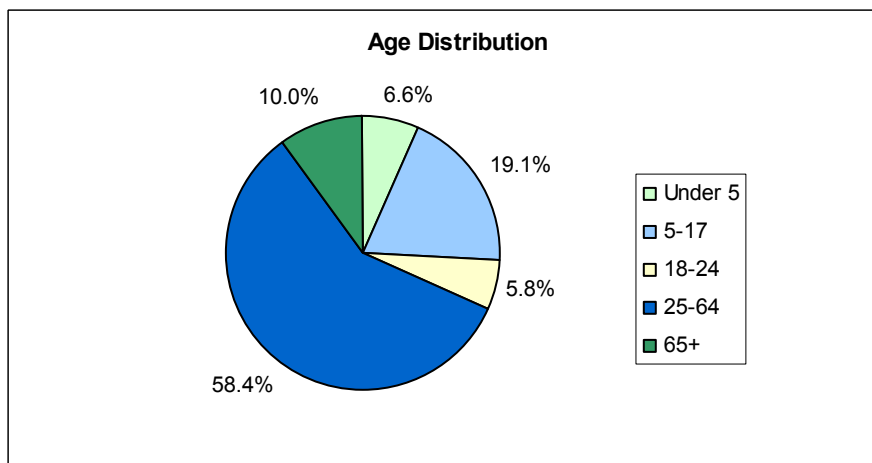


General Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 121,989 individuals reside in Hunterdon County's 26 municipalities. These individuals are spread out over a land area of 429.94 square miles, which translates into a population density of 283.7 persons per square mile. This makes Hunterdon County, ranked 18th, one of the less populous of the state's 21 counties, and ranked 19th, also one of the less densely populated.

At 13.2%, Hunterdon County had more growth from 1990 to 2000 than all but two other counties in the state. Eight municipalities experienced reductions in their population over the past decade, with Stockton at 11% experiencing the greatest population decline (total 2000 population – 560). Municipal population growth varied, ranging from 2% for Hampton (total 2000 population – 1,546) to 30.7% for Alexandria (total 2000 population – 4,698). Hunterdon County's largest communities were also among those experiencing substantial growth, including Clinton township at 19.8% (total 2000 population – 12,957) and Raritan at 26.9% (total 2000 population – 19,809).

Hunterdon County has 31,374 children under the age of 18. They comprise 25.7% of the county's total population and 1.5% of the state's child population. Approximately 64% of Hunterdon County residents are of working age (18 through 64), and 10% are 65 years and older. Hunterdon County has the smallest proportion of young adults, 18 to 24 years of age in the state, and only one county has a smaller percentage of persons 65 years and older. Overall, at 38.8, the median age of Hunterdon County residents is older than the statewide median of 36.7 years of age.



Child Welfare

Hunterdon County's portion of statewide child abuse and neglect referrals is less than the proportion of children residing in the county. While 1.5% of all children in New Jersey reside in Hunterdon County, only 1%, or 391 of the child abuse and neglect referrals are generated there. The patterns of abuse and neglect resemble the state pattern. Compared to statewide percentages, a slightly smaller proportion of Hunterdon County referrals were made for physical abuse and neglect and a slightly larger percentage of the referrals were for other types of abuse.

Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals in 2001

	Hunterdon County		New Jersey	
	N	%	N	%
Physical abuse	118	30.2	12,382	32.0
Emotional abuse	9	2.3	330	0.9
Sexual	28	7.2	2,179	5.6
Neglect	218	55.8	22,099	57.1
Multiple types	18	4.6	1,716	4.4
<i>Total</i>	391	---	38,706	---
Substantiated rate per 1,000 children	2.6	---	4.0	---
Percent substantiated	21.2	---	21.8	---

In the Hunterdon County District Office, the active DYFS caseload is 378 children and 187 families. There are 45 in-state foster homes in Hunterdon County. There are 39 Hunterdon County children in foster care, which is .5% of the 7,807 children in foster care in New Jersey and less than the percentage of children residing in this county. Of the Hunterdon County children in foster care, 61.5% reside in a different county than their family, which is more than the out-of-county statewide average of 44.6%, and the third highest in the state.

From 1998 to 2002, out of a statewide total of 123 deaths of children as a result of abuse and neglect, there was one death of a child in Hunterdon County. The family of this child did not have an open/active case with DYFS at the time of the child's death. The number of all infants who died in Hunterdon County in 2000 was 4, .6% of the 723 infant deaths occurring in the state. The infant mortality rate of 2.8 deaths under the age of 1 per 1,000 live births was lower than the statewide rate of 6.3.¹

Child Welfare Outcome Measures

Information on various child welfare outcomes for Hunterdon County is presented in the following table.² Compared to the national standard, children in foster care in

¹ The Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health and Senior Services notes that rates based on fewer than 20 deaths should be interpreted with caution.

² See definitions that follow for detailed descriptions of the categories presented in this table.

Hunterdon County were substantially more likely to have two or fewer placements if they had been in foster care for less than 12 months (96.9% compared to a national standard of 86.7%). In all other areas, Hunterdon County did not meet the national standard. The county had the second highest percentage in the state of foster care cases where there was a recurrence of maltreatment (17.9% compared to a national standard of 6.1%) and the highest incidence in the state of foster care abuse and neglect (7.14% compared to a national standard of .57%). The percentage of cases in which children re-entered foster care within twelve months of a previous episode of care was substantially higher than the national standard (12.5% in Hunterdon County compared to a national standard of 8.6%), while the percentage of those leaving foster care for adoption who did so within twelve months was substantially lower than the national standard (0% compared to a national standard of 32%).

2001 Child Welfare Outcome Measures by County

	Hunterdon	State	National Standard
Recurrence of maltreatment	17.9%	6.4%	6.1% or less
A/N incidence in foster care	7.14%	.078%	.57% or less
Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry	66.7%	59.5%	76.2% or more
Re-enter care within 12 months	12.5%	8.2%	8.6% or less
Reduce time in foster care to adoption	0.0%	16.3%	32.0% or more
Increase placement stability	96.9%	86.2%	86.7% or more

Note. Data supplied by DYFS

Definitions

Reduce recurrence of maltreatment – of children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first six months of the reporting period, the percentage who had another substantiated or indicated report within a six-month period.

A/N incidence in foster care – of children who were in foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that was the subject of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member.

Reunify within 12 months without increasing re-entry – of children reunified with parents or caretakers at time of discharge from foster care, the percentage reunified within 12 months.

Re-enter care within 12 months – of children who entered foster care during the reporting period, the percentage that re-entered care within 12 months of leaving foster care episode.

Reduce time in foster care to adoption – of all children who exited foster care to adoption, the percentage who exited within 24 months.

Increase placement stability – of all children who had been in foster care less than 12 months, the percentage who had no more than two placement settings during that time period.

Data Sources

DYFS Approved Foster Homes File, 8/4/03
DYFS Caseload Activity Report (DAR-SISM-5), 8/1/03
DYFS, Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2000
DYFS Child Abuse and Neglect in New Jersey Statistical Report for 2001
DYFS Foster Care File Extract, 6/6/03
DYFS Statewide Summary of Foster Homes (DAR-PCISM-1), 7/4/03
NJ Substantiated Abuse and Neglect Child Fatality Analysis for 1998-2002, July 2003
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Redistricting Data Summary File, Population for the Counties and Municipalities in New Jersey: 1990 and 2000 (PL1)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Age and Sex (GCT-P5)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Geographic Comparison Table, Population, Housing Units, Area and Density (GCT-PH1-R)
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 1, Quick Table, QT-P2.
U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Demographic Profiles, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics (DP-1)

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